




Package design as a branding tool in the cosmetic industry: consumers' perception vs. reality

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Abstract

The product packaging plays a crucial role in attracting consumers, persuading them to buy the product, and serving as a vehicle for brand communication. Around 73% of purchasing decisions are made at the point of sale. An enhanced appeal and attractiveness of the product make the selection process easier for consumers. Design and marketing are two major areas that are inextricably linked to each other. Good design distinguishes brands and makes products stand out from the crowd, instilling a certain perception in consumers' minds. Brands that meet the criteria for creating a lasting impression may dominate the market on a global scale in reality. The consumer must perceive the quality that the brand has built into the package, which may be accomplished through various design elements. Colour, shape, images, material, and package convenience are all important design elements in cosmetic branding. These elements are combined well together in a design, but there is a lack of a holistic approach in the design elements that are in line with the consumers' perspective. These aspects are highlighted in the review paper, which also looks at the importance of product packaging in cosmetics branding, and tries to highlight a few ways in which brands can minimize the gap between desired brand message and consumer perception about the brand.

Keywords Package design · Cosmetic industry · Brand image · Visual elements · Brand value · Consumer perception

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Introduction

Background

Packaging design is the process of designing and developing a container (package) to contain, protect, transport, dispense, store, identify, and promote a product (Klimchuk and Krasovec 2018). Depending on the nature of the product, the container can be made of various materials, such as plastic, paper, glass, or metal (Kumar et al. 2021; Gaikwad et al. 2016). The purpose of the package is to sell the product by drawing attention to it while simultaneously allowing it to be contained, utilized, and protected. The importance of packaging has become clear as a result of the global pandemic due to coronavirus disease-2019 (Ramakanth et al. 2021). A well-designed package is considered to have a competitive advantage over others. It can communicate quality and history to the consumers, thus becoming a vital element in product promotion success.

It's no secret that product packaging may have a significant impact on a product's overall performance, but when it comes to cosmetics, that impact is amplified. Cosmetic brands influence consumers' lifestyles. Consumers always desire to have attractive packaging for their cosmetic products. At the same time, the quality of the product inside mustn't be compromised. So, the packaging plays a significant role in serving both quality and aesthetics (White 2020). Consumers have become more conscious in terms of health and aesthetics in the modern era and are eager to keep themselves updated with the latest trends (Angraeni and Rachmanita 2015). According to a comprehensive analysis entitled "Indian skincare industry forecast for 2015," consumers in India are increasingly prioritizing branded products (Narayanan and Sharma, 2020). This phenomenon shows the trust and relationship of consumers with a particular brand. Consumers, especially women, are embarking on an adventure of discovery. They appreciate discovering new brands and products (Kestenbaum 2018). Different brand distinctively communicates their personality or function to consumers. It eases consumers' decision-making ability and acts as a marketing tool that helps consumers select a particular brand among others at the point of sale (POS). It is observed that 70% of purchase decisions are made at the POS (Polyakova 2013). Consumers have a plethora of items, brands, and options to choose from in today's market. There are thousands of different products lying on the shelves of the supermarket. Similar products with different competitive brands are placed side-by-side on the shelf, attracting consumers through their packaging design. It is the difference in packaging design that differentiates the product and the brand. Differentiation must be immediate, and mostly, it should be visual via the look and feel of the package itself as visual stimuli processing accounts for 80% of the human brain's function (Brodersen and Manolova, 2008).

Packaging is always a consumer's initial impression of a product. Consumers prefer to purchase a product that comes in a portable package, performs its function as expected, and provides all information they need to know about the product (Singh et al. 2021). It should be compact, convenient, and environmentally

friendly. These factors impact the product’s market value, so packaging materials are given a style to raise demand and make them more appealing (Muralidhar et al. 2017). The usage of cosmetics has risen drastically in India. People are becoming more aware of their health and appearance as literacy levels have risen and the percentage of working women has increased. As people have grown more sensitive of their looks and beauty, the demand for beauty products and the cosmetic sector has been steadily increasing. According to recent reports, the cosmetics sector is rising at 15–20% every year (Anjana, 2018). Market researchers and organizations are conducting several studies and spending billions of dollars to identify the factors influencing consumers’ cosmetic consumption. The packaging industry hinges around this crucial factor, namely, consumers’ preferences. Companies are now transitioning from a traditional marketing period to a consumer-oriented era, recognizing the value of consumer satisfaction and loyalty (Mert Topoyan 2008). The social, cultural, and psychological factors that commonly influence consumers’ purchasing decisions are briefly described in Fig. 1. Consumers’ perceptions of a brand can have a significant influence on their purchasing decisions (Polyakova 2013). To create a positive perception, brand reputation and brand awareness are important. Brand perception is intangible, it is difficult to define. The strength of a brand is determined by how it is perceived. The consumers’ perception of a brand is a crucial factor in maintaining its reputation and it can be only achieved when the gap between reality and perception is minimal. It is the marketer’s job to convey a clear and consistent brand message to bridge the gap between reality and perception. Consumers’ knowledge of the brand is controllable, but their emotions about it are not. Emotions are more complicated. The consumers’ perception of the brand is a complex mixture of all of their interactions with it, both directly and indirectly. Effective branding instils in the individual an emotional memory that will remain with them through time and impact their perception of the brand. As far as consumer opinions are taken into account, brand perception can become a brand reality. As a result, incorporating

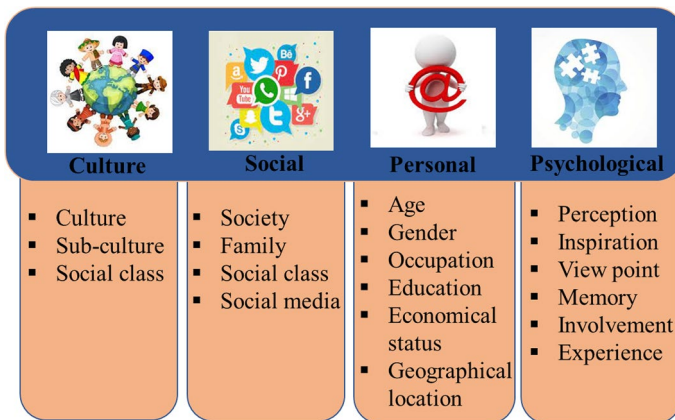


Fig. 1 Consumers purchasing decision influencing factors consisting of culture, social, personal and psychological

consumer feedback and opinions into packaging design is important for synchronizing brand perception and reality, which aids in gaining a competitive advantage over competitors (Olenski 2019).

The package design serves as the “salesman on the shelf.” It ensures that a brand stands out, is recognized, and can be used to stimulate the impulsive buying behavior of consumers (Narayanan and Sharma, 2020). The physical appearance of a product’s packaging is frequently the sole reason for a product’s sale, whether it’s a planned decision or an impulse purchase. It ensures that a brand is noticeable, stands out, and is featured in the products which are under consideration (Rettie and Brewer 2000). Packaging design comprises two kinds of elements: verbal and visual, both can influence consumer purchase decisions (Mohebbi 2014).

Literature

Recently, (Ahmed et al. 2020) analyzed the impact of packaging on consumer purchasing decisions. The author examined the critical aspects that drive a brand’s success, in the form of a survey. According to the findings, package characteristics such as color, packaging material, wrapper design, and innovation are important aspects for consumers when making purchasing decisions. In 2019, a similar study was conducted by (Shajahan and Safi 2019) to find out the factors which influence the consumers buying behavior in a form of a survey and found that quality and reasonable price are the major reasons for the purchase of the cosmetic product. Another study reported by Garaszczuk (2015) revealed that at attentional-capture efficacy and perceived brand attributes in different package design styles, hypothesizing that minimalist design has a high attention-capturing potency as well as perceived eco-friendliness and quality. Alervall and Saied (2013a) tried to find out the factors which influence the consumers’ buying behavior by interviewing the designers and marketers. According to the author, color is one of the visual factors that professionals pay attention to attract customers and influence their emotions. In another study, Ritnamkam and Sahachaisaeree (2012) conducted a survey and constituted a set of differentiating packaging design guidelines for males and females on package shape and color tone.

The existing literature lacks a holistic strategy that is in line with the consumer-centric approach. There hasn’t been much research done in India’s demographic areas on the importance of packaging design as a branding tool. The intended brand reality does not always align with the message that the consumer perceives. So, there is no guarantee that the image a company wants to project to build a brand is the same image that the consumers perceived when they see the brand. It is important for marketers to figure out the ways to find how near is the consumer perception to that of desired brand reality. A holistic approach that is in accordance with customer expectations is required to keep the effective elements and evolve the ones that are important for branding.

The previous studies reported were focused on either brand elements or buying behavior, there were no review articles reported about the consumers’ perception vs. reality of brand in line with design elements. This review intends to add to the

current literature on cosmetic packaging and marketing studies by shedding more light on the discrepancy between the desired brand message and consumer brand perception. We started with a fundamental understanding of cosmetic packaging and its components and gained insight into what motivates a consumer to choose one product over another. After that, we discussed the relationship between packaging design and branding. Packaging is a very creative medium for communicating a brand message and brand identity. Then we have demonstrated the factors which have the greatest impact on consumers' purchasing decisions, as well as how the consumer perceives the brand and how close the consumer perception is to the desired brand reality. Later we have provided a detailed description of brand building and packaging design elements.

Cosmetics packaging

Cosmetics are now often regarded as one of life's most important commodities. India is one of the most rapidly expanding cosmetics marketplaces in the world (Mohan 2019). The abundance of well-known and high-quality domestic and international brands has made it challenging for marketers in the booming cosmetics industry to build strong brand loyalty (Parmar 2014). The L'Oréal S.A., Johnson & Johnson Pvt. Ltd., Hindustan Unilever Ltd, The Procter & Gamble Company, Beiersdorf AG, CavinKare Pvt. Ltd., Shiseido Company Ltd., and The Estée Lauder Companies Inc. are just a few of the world's most well-known cosmetic companies. With different innovations, the cosmetic industry has entirely redefined fashion and revived the lives of all types of individuals (Parmar 2014). Cosmetic packaging is important, since it informs consumers about a product and convinces them to trust it. They are primarily designed to elicit positive emotional responses. As visual components of a package contribute to aesthetics, packaging design has a more significant impact on customer preference in cosmetics products (Mert Topoyan 2008). Because aesthetic features are subjective, they might be categorized as perception-based.

Despite its appealing design, the container should be made so that it should be easy to use, compatible with the product it contains, and acquire the required functional properties. It should also protect the product from weather and exterior contamination as the cosmetics are treated as "perishables" and have a definite shelf life (Cheskin et al. 2016). Thus, it should be protected from air, heat, light, cold, moisture, dust, dirt, etc. The cosmetics industry uses several packaging materials, including plastics, glass, and metal, with glass being one of the oldest and most elegant. A detailed explanation of the materials used in cosmetic packaging can be found in the following sections.

Cosmetics packaging materials

In the marketing of cosmetic products, the quality of the packing materials is equally important. Packaging that is of great quality is usually related to high-quality products. Consumers are more likely to trust a brand and its product when they see

well-designed, high-quality product packaging and desires to purchase it. Cosmetics packaged in high-quality material packaging provide clear communication that the product will be reliable and well-made. This section looks into the various materials utilized in the development of cosmetic product packaging.

Glass: many well-known cosmetic brands use a large amount of glass packaging in their products, which makes them elegant and gives a premium appearance. Glass has the advantage of a non-porous, non-toxic surface with a high impermeability. As it is made from natural materials, it is chemically inert and is the only material resistant to acids except a few like hydrofluoric acid (Grayhurst 2012). It offers a distinct sense of luxury. No other packaging material matches the shelf impact of glass. Glass is 100% recyclable and can be recycled indefinitely without compromising its quality or purity (Glass Packaging Institute 2016). The most common types of glass used in bottles are soda-lime glass, treated soda-lime glass, and borosilicate glass. Regular soda-lime is more chemical resistant than treated soda-lime, making it suitable for general packaging purposes with attractive shapes and designs (Cospers 2016). The disadvantage of glass packaging is that it is not durable and quite fragile, the whole product can be wasted if not treated carefully. Compared to plastics and light metals, glass is heavy, due to this, the shipping cost can become costlier and requires more energy in transporting the same, contributing to the higher carbon footprint (Shivsharan et al. 2014).

Plastics: the cosmetic packaging sector has been filled with plastic because of the ease with which they can be formed, their high quality, inexpensive, lightweight, and the variety of designs they provide. Plastic containers offer resistance against breakage and thus reduce losses during transportation, handling and offer safety to consumers during usage. The most common plastic types used in cosmetic containers are polypropylene, polyethylene terephthalate, or acrylic plastic. Acrylic plastic is usually clear and resembles glass. This type of material has an advantage over glass as it is not susceptible to breakage (Cospers 2016). In 2018, the plastic sector had the most outstanding market share of 62.5 percent, and it is predicted to continue to develop rapidly in the coming years (Research 2020). Due to its extensive application and inexpensive cost, manufacturers prefer plastic packaging. However, the main problem behind using plastic is that it is non-biodegradable, and it does not break down naturally and turns into waste and remains in land and ocean fills, which is a major disadvantage. As per the European plastic waste report statistics, polyolefins are the major contributors to plastic waste (Deshmukh et al. 2022). According to the United Nations, marine debris affects at least 800 species globally, with plastic accounting for up to 80% of the waste (Reddy 2018). Every year, up to 13 million metric tonnes of plastic is estimated to end up in the ocean, affecting the marine ecosystem and entering the food chain. Sea creatures get tangled up in plastic netting, which kills and harms them. Many pieces of plastic waste found floating in the sea can be swallowed by sea animals, and floating plastic waste also stops sunlight from reaching plankton and algae, which are vital food sources for many small and big aquatic species. The beauty industry uses microbeads (tiny solid plastics) in many of their packagings to give exfoliating properties, to create gloss, and as fillers. Due to its small size, it mixes with the food chain, affecting the environment, humans, and animals (Miles 2019).

Metals: beauty brands are switching to metal packaging. The move from plastic to metal packaging will differentiate the brand and add value to products. Traditionally tinplate was used in cosmetic packaging, which is obtained by a surface coating of mild steel sheets either by a dipping or electrolytic process. Now the trend has shifted to aluminium containers. Cans and tubes are commonly used in cosmetic products packaging. The aluminium collapsible tubes have the ability to protect against atmospheric oxidation, bacterial or fungal contamination. Still, the main disadvantage of collapsible aluminium tubes is that the tube gets distorted after usage, spoiling the look. Plastic collapsible tubes are produced to overcome this problem, which regains its shape after use but are prone to bacterial spoilage (Packaging 2018). The metal packaging can easily be turned into usable content and provides cheaper recycling than the other materials. Metals also offer a more robust packaging system for the products. The drawback of metal packaging is that it cannot be used for all products due to its reactive nature (Sun 2020).

Packaging closures

Closure of any kind is used to contain and protect a product by providing integrity to a package (Emblem 2012). It is the most important component of a container. It should be compatible with the product and provide stability by preventing the contents from escaping and entering the container. It must be easy and convenient and should fit with the package's general design. Although the closure is rarely the first thing a consumer notices about a package on the shelf, it significantly impacts the consumer experience and leaves an enduring brand impression. In terms of design, practicality is the most important factor to consider while choosing a closure. Hence the brands should pay an emphasis on closure convenience to ensure that they portray a positive image to consumers in reality. Even though the first impression of the package may lead to a purchase, the overall experience can affect whether or not a consumer will repurchase the same brand, hence closure plays an important part in this regard. Both the function and the aesthetic appearance are necessary for a successful product. Cosmetic brands are gradually shifting from simple cosmetic closures to more elaborate multipurpose closures. More emphasis is placed on dispensing products in precise proportions (Mcdougall 2013). Some of the universal closures used are shown in Fig. 2. Dispensing closures are ideal for products generally used in measured amounts, including disc top cap, fine mist sprayer, glass dropper, orifice reducer cap, pump dispensing cap, snap-top cap, trigger sprayer, and twist top cap. In contrast, non-dispensing closures such as continuous thread cap, lug cap, dome cap, pail lid, ribbed closure, and smooth closure are ideal for beverages or liquids with a higher viscosity (Bryant 2019).

Buying motivation

The relevance of packaging in a company's communication mix is emphasized, because packaging is the last marketing communication tool used before making a purchase. The first thing that draws the attention of the consumers is the product



Fig. 2 Commercially available closure systems for different cosmetic products, **a** fine mist Sprayer, **b** Lotion pump, **c** Trigger pump sprayer, **d** Screw cap, **e** Lug cap, **f** Press top cap, **g** Snap top cap, **h** Flip top cap

design. A consumer analyses the content and information about the actual product only after being enticed by the product package's visual elements (Polyakova 2013). When it comes to purchasing selections, the packaging is evaluated by a consumer in a variety of ways. Different design features on the package elicit a desire to buy the product. Their purchasing decisions are influenced by the level of involvement of the purchase (Kotler and Keller 2006). When a customer identifies an issue, it triggers a desire to solve it, and they begin searching for a solution. Depending on whether the purchase requires high or low involvement, attitudes are developed or modified. In low involvement purchases, many consumers are influenced by the visual elements of packaging design. High involvement purchasing decisions are always based on the information searching and evaluation of alternatives (Solomon et al. 2002). Image concerns have less influence on decision-making for high-involvement products. Figure 3 depicts the consumer buying pattern based on the high and low involvement purchase decisions once the problem has been identified.

Packaging design and brand

Before launching any product into a market, it is given a name or an identity so that it can be easily distinguished from the products of competitors. So, companies build a brand to persuade consumers to purchase their product rather than competitors. A brand is a name, symbol, or other attribute that characterizes or identifies a product or service provided by a manufacturer (Klimchuk and Krasovec 2018). It is a company's most valuable asset and has the power to attract and keep consumers loyal to the brand. Customers identify with brands that are representative of their personal preferences. The product itself is made, but the brand is formed. A brand can only

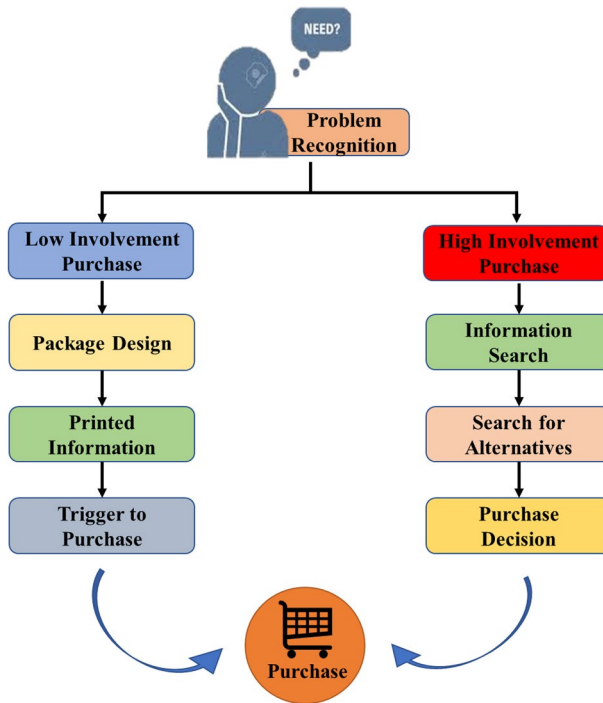


Fig. 3 Consumers buying patterns based on the high and low involvement purchase decisions

exist if it communicates, and the most effective ways to communicate are through packaging design and advertisement. Table 1 displays the commercially available hair care product brands in the current global market from different fast-moving consumer goods manufacturers.

The process of branding makes the brands powerful. The primary goal of branding is to highlight the differences between its product and those of its competitors. The product packaging design plays a significant role in branding products in the retail market. The importance of packaging in branding is amplified in the case of cosmetics. The appeal of this industry arises not only from the product itself, but also from its packaging. The manufacturer’s brand is represented via the product labelling and packaging. Customers loyal to a brand will always repurchase it and suggest it to others through word of mouth. Packaging design acts as the carrier of advertising messages and corporate slogans. It establishes the brand’s image and strengthens the relationship between the consumer and the product. It can also reduce threats and assure the consumer. It ensures that consumers receive the same level of service regardless of where they shop. It streamlines the decision-making process, ensures uniform quality, and responds to specific requirements. Customers are drawn to products by their color, labelling, and overall look when making unplanned purchases. To keep alive in a present global competitive market, brands must appeal to people’s emotions. Because emotions drive most of our decisions, the emotional connection surpasses the product, thus surpassing its brand (Carter 2020).

Table 1 Commercially available hair care products in current global market from different fast moving consumer goods manufacturers along with its brand name, brand identity, packaging material used, type of closure, shape, and colour tone

Manufacturer	Brand name	Brand identity	Packaging material	Types of closures	Package shape	Colour tone
L'Oréal S.A., France	Garnier		Low density polyethylene	Round flip top	Symmetric oval cross section with wider waist with no shoulder having centre of cross section along the common line	Harmony tone

Table 1 (continued)

Manufacturer	Brand name	Brand identity	Packaging material	Types of closures	Package shape	Colour tone
	The Body Shop®		High density polyethylene	Flip top	Soft tapered round bottle with cylindrical neck having centre of cross section along the common line	Contrast tone
CavinKare Pvt. Ltd., India	Nyle®		Polyethylene Terephthalate	Square flip top	Free shape with wide heel and asymmetric cross section having centre of cross section along the common line	Harmony tone

Table 1 (continued)

Manufacturer	Brand name	Brand identity	Packaging material	Types of closures	Package shape	Colour tone
Chik®			High density polyethylene	Flip top	Narrow waist with no shoulder having centre of cross section along the common line	Contrast tone

Table 1 (continued)

Manufacturer	Brand name	Brand identity	Packaging material	Types of closures	Package shape	Colour tone
Unilever plc, England	Clear™		High density polyethylene	Square flip top	Symmetric, square base with no shoulder having centre of cross section along the common line	Nemplementary (White)

Table 1 (continued)

Manufacturer	Brand name	Brand identity	Packaging material	Types of closures	Package shape	Colour tone
	Sunsilk®		High density polyethylene	Round flip top	free shape with long concave bottle having centre of crossing section along the common line	Warm pink

Table 1 (continued)

Manufacturer	Brand name	Brand identity	Packaging material	Types of closures	Package shape	Colour tone
Dove			High density polyethylene	Dome shape flip top	Symmetric, wide heel with no shoulder	Contrast tone

Table 1 (continued)

Manufacturer	Brand name	Brand identity	Packaging material	Types of closures	Package shape	Colour tone
<i>TRESemmé</i> ®		High density polyethylene	Press top disc cap	Symmetric, Sharp edge contour with wide shoulder	Nemplementary (black)	

Table 1 (continued)

Manufacturer	Brand name	Brand identity	Packaging material	Types of closures	Package shape	Colour tone
	Clinic plus +		High density polyethylene	Trapezium shape flip top	Symmetric oval cross section with no shoulder and narrow base	Contrast tone

Table 1 (continued)


Manufacturer	Brand name	Brand identity	Packaging material	Types of closures	Package shape	Colour tone
Procter and Gamble Corporation, United States of America	Head and Shoulders™		High density polyethylene	Rectangle flip top	Asymmetric with no shoulder and wide waist	Contrast tone

Table 1 (continued)

Manufacturer	Brand name	Brand identity	Packaging material	Types of closures	Package shape	Colour tone
	Herbal Essences		Polycethylene terephthalate	Round flip top	Symmetric oval cross section with smooth edge shoulder	Cool contrast tone

Table 1 (continued)

Manufacturer	Brand name	Brand identity	Packaging material	Types of closures	Package shape	Colour tone
Pantene pro-v		Aluminium	Dispenser pump	Symmetric round bottle with smooth edge shoulder	Warm tone	

Consumers' perception vs. reality

Consumers' perception of the brand is the act of identifying and analyzing visual information to fully understand the brand's message. All strong brands have a core identity, brand message, brand personality, and even a brand positioning statement, regardless of whether or not their message is being received properly by consumers. The product's market position and brand awareness build the perceptions. A variety of promotional messages, as well as the aesthetics of their product packaging, together raise the brand's awareness. Familiarity is not only a useful measure of a brand's position in the market. The top brand of any product frequently enjoys both familiarity and salience (Bogart and Lehman 1973). In business, there is no guarantee that the image a company wishes to project to build a brand is the same image that the target audience perceived when they see the brand. The image perceived by consumers determines the product's market position (Desai and Ratneshwar 2003). So, consumers have the power to influence the rise or fall of any particular brand, and marketers must understand and value the importance of providing constant features to their brand portfolio to maintain the customer's trust.

Prominent brand marketers frequently use advertising to selectively reinforce certain of their brand identity to effectively position the brand image in consumers' minds. If a company portrays a brand's message and is received by the consumer in the same way, the consumers' perception and reality will align. In addition, the better this is done, the stronger the brand will be and the values will be preserved, whereas the brands that do the reverse, which creates a gap between perception and reality, will become weaker over time as the consumers notice the contradictions (Adducci 2008). So, there is a need to make a change in the branding strategy to address the requirements and concerns of consumers, but if too many changes are made too quickly, it will confuse the consumers. Brands should try to respond to consumer reviews while staying true to the brand's core message. Even the best brand strategy won't make every consumer think the way they want them to. It's a futile effort to try to execute the perfect marketing strategy. The approach should focus on how to minimize as much of the gap between brand perception and brand reality as possible. Data analysis can be used to do this. The first step is to identify the root cause of the problem. The next stage is decided by the assessment's outcome. Many marketing failures are caused by a misinterpretation of customer requirements as well as lack of a unique brand identity. The relationship between the consumers' perception and the desired reality is depicted in Fig. 4.

Brand building

It is not enough to have an excellent product if it does not have a strong brand (Mindrut et al. 2015). Branding doesn't happen in a day or even in a few months. Making a product known in the market and fitting them into the consumers'

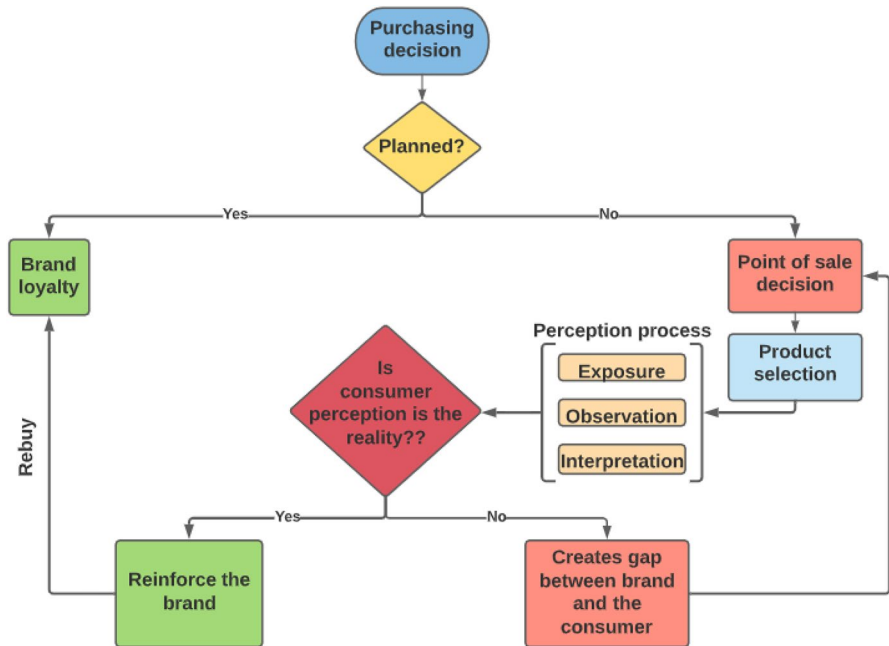


Fig. 4 Purchasing decision based on the relation between the consumers’ perception vs. reality. If perception and reality are in sync, the consumer will be motivated to repurchase; if not, the consumer will notice the contradictions over time, leads to the gap between brand and the consumer

minds is a long process and requires a strategy. In this section, we had discussed the fundamentals of brand building. Before presenting a detailed explanation of how packaging design fits into the branding process, the section covers the elements of a brand, its concepts, and the brand-building process.

Brand elements

Brand value

To build a strong brand in consumers’ minds, the brand value must be maintained and distinct. Brand value includes both functional and emotional value (Polyakova 2013). The functional value represents product quality and is capable of resolving the consumption problems. The prime functions of the package are to contain, protect, and identify. The product should remain in the same condition and does not change its basic shape or usage throughout its life cycle, from manufacturing to the ultimate consumer. The protection is necessary not only during transportation and handling but also against environmental forces, such as moisture, gases, light, temperature, and others. The purpose of identification is to convey information about the product to the customer. In addition to the functional value, the emotional value also plays an important role. Positive emotions and pleasant experiences with packages

increase the consumers' choice of selecting a product. Negative emotions influenced by the package can hinder the business value of the product in the market. Package design aims to meet and adapt consumer expectations and to create positive emotions (Radoslavov and Nikov 2015). The emotional appeal of packages is often overlooked, as designers tend to pay more attention to graphical design, typography, industrial design, and usability issues. The impressions, feelings, and emotions of consumers influenced by a package are essential for purchasing it or not. As a result, package design necessitates an understanding of the consumer's feelings and impressions. The approach of designing a package should be such that it can capture and convert subjective and even subconscious consumer feelings about a package into specific design elements.

Brand identity

The brand identity contains all of the brand's fundamental elements, including the name, colors, symbols, and other design elements. The visual representation and integration of these elements establish the brand and distinguishes one marketer's products and/or services from another and is resistant to change. The brand identity is made up of brand values. What the brand represents, what gives it purpose, and what makes it unique are all defined by its brand identity. Consumers' visual recall of essential design components demonstrates the power of a brand identity. It is made up of two parts: a core and an extended identity (Brodersen and Manolova 2008). The core identity reflects the brand values, but the extended identity comprises brand identity aspects, such as the brand name, logo, origin, additional services, and so on, which give the brand more depth. Packaging is an essential aspect of brand identity in terms of design. It's a part of the extended identity, since it provides the brand with a sense of completeness, texture, and direction. Brand and marketing strategists have complete control over the manipulation of brand identity.

Brand promise

The manufacturer's assurance or guarantee on the product and its claims is known as a brand promise. The brand promise is conveyed through the brand identity in packaging design. The ability to keep a brand's promise is crucial in developing consumer loyalty and maintaining a product's success on the shelf. Failures in packaging design can have a negative impact on the perception of a brand promise and the perceived worth of a product. The failure might include difficulty in dispensing or opening easily due to flawed design, the product name is difficult to pronounce, or the product's nature is unclear. The design portrays a product that is superior to its competitors. Yet, it is actually inferior. A low-quality design is interpreted as the packaging of the low-cost, low-quality product, and a design that is too similar to its competitors causes market confusion. The elements of the brand identity are out of scale with the packaging structure (Klimchuk and Krasovec 2018).

Brand image

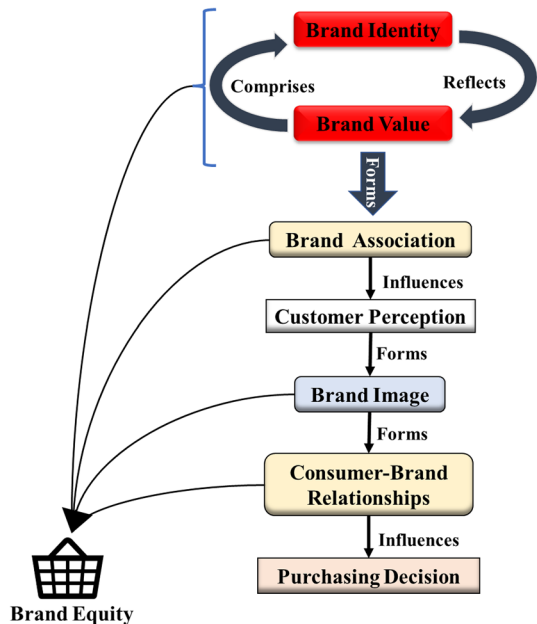
When brand identity enters the communication loop, it is interpreted by the consumer. Consumers form opinions about a brand based on their experiences and perceptions. Because of the processes that influence branding communication, there is frequently a misalignment between brand identity and brand image. As a result, the company’s brand image is beyond its control. On the other hand, packaging design plays a vital role in conveying the desired brand image to consumers as it is one of the controllable elements that determine how a branded product is perceived.

Brand equity

When the packaging design becomes the brand’s image, consumers recognize and visually identify with a brand’s values, qualities, features, and attributes. From the product’s physical structure and visual identity to a consumer’s emotional connection with it, the packaging design is tied to the brand’s legitimacy and reliability from a marketing aspect. These distinguishing characteristics help the consumer in recalling the brand. These visual identifiers become valuable assets or brand equity.

Companies make a great effort in managing their brand equity. When a brand adheres to its product features and promises of quality and value, it establishes brand equity. Consumers such as brands with good reputations, which makes product selection easier. Consumers buy from companies they can trust. Typography, symbols, icons, characters, colors, and structures are some of the visual components of a packaging design that can contribute to a company’s brand equity for existing brands. In contrast, there is no existing equity to build on for new companies with

Fig. 5 Relationship between various brand drivers, such as brand identity, brand value, brand image, brand association and consumer-brand relationship which influences the brand. These visual identifiers all together become brand equity



a brief history in the marketplace (Abigail 2021). Figure 5 depicts the relationship between various brand drivers, such as brand identity, brand value, brand image, brand association, and consumer-brand connection, which influences the brand.

Stages in the brand-building process

A successful brand-building strategy outshines the competition and is vital in establishing consumer loyalty. The smaller the gap between the consumers' desired brand value and its perceived brand image, the more effective the brand-building approach will be. The brand-building process steps are brand conceptualization (which covers three key aspects: product attributes, brand identity, and core values), brand positioning, and brand communication (Brodersen and Manolova 2008).

Brand conceptualization

Product attributes, core values, and brand identity are the three essential elements in the brand conceptualization process. The product functionality is addressed in the first step of the branding process. Behind every successful brand, there is an outstanding product. A strong brand is immediately distinguishable from its competitors; therefore, a distinct visual identity can boost a brand's competitive advantage. As the processing of visual stimuli accounts for 80% of the human brain's function, it becomes clear why color, design configuration, and shape can impact how a brand is viewed, visualized, and personalized (Brodersen and Manolova 2008).

The second step of the branding process focuses on establishing the brand's identity. A product's visual identity can enhance brand identity. The distribution of the brand is an important aspect in the development of its identity. As consumers come into contact with a brand through the distributor, a manufacturer needs to assess the distributor's image. If the manufacturer's and distributor's identities aren't compatible, there's a chance that brand communication will be inconsistent. For example, H&M and The Body Shop distribute their brands under their own administration, allowing them to control the brand-building process. The next step in the branding process is determining the brand's core values, i.e., its functional (product qualities) and emotional benefits (brand identity) that are important to consumers, easy to express, unique, and difficult to copy.

Brand positioning

After determining the primary brand benefits, the following step in the branding process is positioning. It refers to the concept that a brand occupies a unique position in the minds of consumers. The process begins with determining the category in which the brand should be linked, followed by indicating the brand's competitive advantage over the other brands in that category. Its positioning influences a brand's positioning in the competitive marketplace as well as an awareness of how consumers identify with it.

Brand communication strategy

Brand positioning is achieved through brand communication. When communication efforts are consistent, integrated, clear, and distinct, they improve the brand-building process. Thematic, visual, verbal, and audial identity are four different approaches to communicate brand identity. For example, L’Oréal products employ a dominant word strategy: because your worth it, while NIVEA’s most recognized identity is its blue and white color combination.

Packaging design elements

Packaging is a crucial component of the branding process, since it helps communicate an organization’s image and identity. The design should be such that it immediately evokes brand memories and automatically brings thoughts about the brand into the consumers’ consciousness. The packaging design elements/attributes automatically evoke the brand identity and communicate the brand value to consumers. So, the packaging design elements are divided into two categories, visual and verbal elements that communicate with consumers at POS. Verbal elements are used to convey information, while visual factors influence emotions. Figure 6 shows the classification of elements of packaging design into verbal and visual elements. Verbal elements consist of product details, manufacturer and country of origin, and brand name, whereas visual elements comprise color, graphics, size/form, and typography.

According to a few studies, around two-thirds of purchases are made in default mode, in which the consumers pay little attention to brand selection at the stores (Kumar Agariya et al. 2012). This is because most consumers know the brand they want to buy before they walk into a store. As a result, it is the only packaging design that directly impacts the consumer’s purchasing decision and has the power to

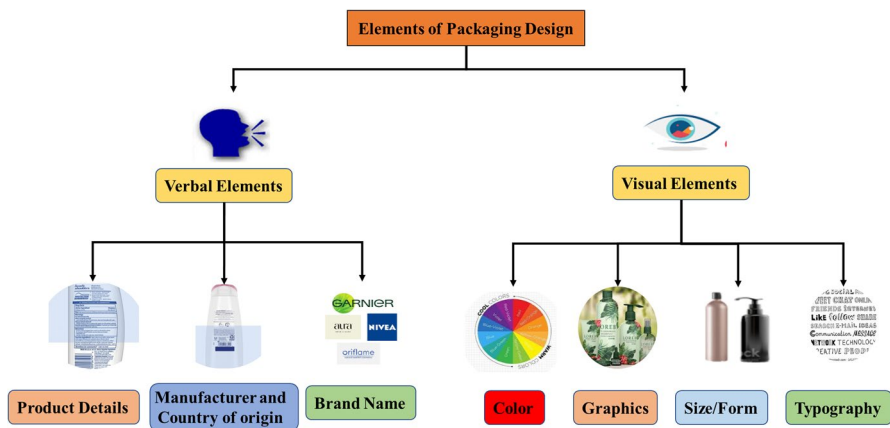


Fig. 6 Classification of elements of packaging design into verbal and visual elements. Verbal elements consisting of Product details, Manufacturer and country of origin and Brand name whereas visual elements comprising of color, graphics, size/form and typography

change their decision at POS. Perception is quick at the point of sale. Immediate recognition is critical for inclusion in the decision-making process so, when consumers are under time constraints, visual elements have a more significant influence on product selection, since they do not have enough time to read information; however, when consumers are not under time constraints, verbal elements of the package have a more decisive influence (Silayoi and Speece 2004), (Butkevičienė et al. 2008). This section will cover the different visual elements of a packaging design used to alter the product's overall appearance and positioning of the brand.

Visual elements of the packaging design

The visual elements of the packaging that influence consumers' purchasing decisions include color, typography, graphics, and size/form (Liyana et al. 2016).

Color

Colour is one of the most significant aspects of packaging design. Consumers are more likely to recognize a product by its color than by any other visual element. Table 2 shows that color has the largest influence on consumers' buying behavior to designers and marketers, among different visual elements of packaging design. Color defines a product's identity, attracts attention to its attributes, and allows it to stand out among competitors in a cluttered retail environment. Most consumers make their purchasing selections at the store shelf, and the color is frequently a factor in their judgments. An eye-catching color would result in a lasting effect on consumers' purchase decisions. It is estimated that about 62–90% of the evaluation is based on colors alone (Singh 2006). It's an important element of packaging design, because it is usually vibrant and memorable.

The initial role of color is to attract attention, particularly at the moment of purchase, where it has been proved that bright colors, such as red and yellow attract attention. Colour is used to convey various messages, as individuals identify colors with different emotions or sentiments. Because each color has its own significance, red makes people excited, while blue makes them peaceful. Warm colors signify fire and the sun (both of which are very progressive), whereas cool colors represent air

Table 2 Different visual elements of a packaging design that influences consumer buying behaviour according to designers and marketers (Alervall and Saied 2013a, b)

Visual Elements	Designers	Marketers	All the Respondents
Colour	34.8%	75%	45.2%
Graphics	21.7%	–	16.1%
All/combinations	17.4%	12.5%	16.1%
Shape	13%	–	9.7%
Size	8.7%	–	6.5%
Material	4.4%	–	3.2%
Other	–	12.5%	3.2%

Table 3 Meanings and connotations of different colors in everyday life, especially in marketing









Colour	Connotation	References
	<p>It symbolizes love, passion, energy, attracting attention, confidence, strength, power, and violence, rage, conflict, and danger</p>	<p>Smith (2019)</p>
	<p>It is related to enthusiasm, optimism, encourage communication, and attention seeker. It represents happiness, warmth, vitality, joy, hope, as well as caution and cowardice</p>	<p>Smith (2019)</p>
	<p>Orange is energetic, spiritual, and attention seeker color. It represents happiness, energy, enthusiasm, warmth, and excitement</p>	<p>Cherry (2020a)</p>
	<p>It represents healing nature, loyalty, bravery, dedication, trustworthiness, relaxation peaceful, and serenity, as well as depression and sadness</p>	<p>Smith (2019)</p>

Table 3 (continued)

Colour	Connotation	References
	It symbolizes royalty, luxury, creativity, power, nobility, dignity, and ambition. Light hue represents feminine power and delicacy, whereas dark hue induces feelings of sadness and frustration	Bourn (2011b, a)
	It is a sign of natural, tranquility, good luck, motivating, health, creativity, and calm. It improves reading ability	Cherry (2021a, b, c)
	White is linked to cleanliness, innocence, peacefulness, purity, simplicity, and freshness. It expresses a sense of security	Cherry (2020b)
	Black represents power, elegance, formality, unity, seriousness, sophistication and mystery, and darkness, despair, and evil	Smith (2019)

and water (giving a tranquil feeling) (Alervall and Saied 2013a). The meanings of different colors are summarized in Table 3.

Colors evoke brands; using a color that is out of sync with the brand's overall expression and does not communicate product consistently might lead to consumer confusion. It's crucial to examine the psychological significance of the colors chosen and how they'll be perceived. Beauty brands that understand how to use color effectively will stand out in today's visual world. It's not only about the color's hue. It's also about communicating with the brand's DNA, product name, shape, packaging, and target market. Colour is undeniably influential in the cosmetics industry. Complimentary or contrasting color schemes, similar or monochromatic color schemes and pointed or faded color schemes can all aid in product differentiation. The color of their packaging design identifies many consumer products, and that color subsequently becomes a critical aspect of the product's personality or brand image. When people associate a hue with a brand, it becomes part of the packaging's overall "trade dress". A design's color, size, shape, graphic configuration, and other non-functional components can all be trademarked. As a result, it is important to emphasize that choosing the proper colors and their creative and psychological combination in packaging will significantly increase product sales.

Typography

Typography is the visual representation of a spoken language using letterforms. Legibility, readability, reading time, size, shape, and style are all typographic characteristics that affect communication. It is the primary means of communicating a product's name, purpose, and other critical information to a broad consumer audience. The saying "you can't design without type" is especially true in the case of packaging design. The typography is one of the most critical aspects of the product's visual expression. The marketing message, which is communicated through packaging design typography, is initially viewed from a distance and is quickly noticed by people of varied cultural, social, and ethnic backgrounds. The typographic choices will vary from one assignment to the next.

The brand identity is typically the starting point for the visual and verbal story that gives life to the brand and its products. Typography, along with a brand's logo, plays a significant role in a brand's visual image. Typographic selection criteria for the brand identity are similar to those for other components of packaging design. The first and most enduring impression of a product's personality is made through the product's name and brand emblem; thus, typography is crucial. Brands need to consider how many typefaces are required to convey a concept. A fundamental rule for every packaging design project is to utilize no more than three typefaces (Klimchuk and Krasovec 2018), (Ovsiyannikov 2021). The visual information is organized to allow the consumer to read it from greater to lower importance. This is how a consumer may tell what to take out from a packaging design just by looking at it. The typographic hierarchy is constructed using design concepts, such as positioning, alignment, relationship, scale, weight, contrast, and color to match the visual communication strategy. The consumer intellectually and emotionally connects with the brand name and the product name. The use of



Fig. 7 Typography of several cosmetic brands to communicate brand identity

type that is consistent in personality, style, positioning, and hierarchy creates a cohesive look across a brand family, resulting in a powerful shelf presence. Figure 7 shows the typography of several cosmetic brands that communicates brand identity.

Graphics

When creating a package design, it is crucial to remember that consumers evaluate packaging in various ways. The level of involvement of the consumer with the product influences the packaging design. When it comes to high-involvement products, image concerns are less important, though graphics and color become more important and prominent when it comes to low-involvement products. Image arrangement, color combination, typography, and product photography are all elements of graphics. An image is created by combining all of these elements. Consumers prefer to glance at pictures before reading words. Therefore, imagery is an excellent medium for conveying a brand's message. Imagery can create visual excitement, memorable experiences, and recognized touchpoints when applied correctly. Eye-catching graphics help the product stand out on the shelf and draw in buyers. The package's graphics provide detailed product information. It takes on the form of a product's branding or identity.

To keep alive in the present global competitive market, companies or manufacturers always have to develop novel ideas, materials, or designs. Graphics play an important part in demonstrating a brand's concepts and how much it cares about the emotions of its consumers and the present situation. One such example is the Dettol handwash packaging design. Dettol, a well-known hygiene brand, is replacing its emblem on its handwash with an image of Covid protectors and their inspiring story (Campaign India 2021). As consumer moods stay drab and conversations about the epidemic dominate day-to-day issues, brands are reverting to more sombre advertising. As a result, this warrior pack will win the hearts of many consumers.

Size/form

Graphics, colors, and typography can't convey as much about a brand as the shape of packaging can. The shape brings together the senses of touch and sight to create a stronger and more lasting bond. Although the structure is most typically thought of in terms of protection and functional benefits, but it has other essential attributes. The form of a package impacts its shelf presence and how well it fits into consumers' hands.

As we progress into the present phase of the sustainable design movement, the structure is becoming increasingly important. With all of the advancements in materials, manufacturing technologies, and sustainable design processes, packaging structure provides a huge potential for design. Still, it also comes with a great deal of responsibility to maintain brand standards. Many shapes have become part of the brand image (Fig. 8). Designers should express a variety of emotions based on the shapes of distinct objects. For example, square shapes evoke a sense of stability, whereas circular shapes evoke a sense of completion or perfection (Alervall and Saied 2013a).

Future prospects

As the beauty industry proved to be successful, startups flourished. This has resulted in a competitive marketplace, giving beauty consumers a plethora of options. As a result, the competition is seeking for additional competitive qualities as well. Innovative concepts have become increasingly important, as communication is no longer possible through the clutter. Companies have been using plastic that lasts forever for decades to create containers due to their simplicity of formation, excellent quality, low cost, lightweight, and variety of designs. Plastics such as urea–formaldehyde,

Fig. 8 Different types of containers for cosmetic packaging that come in a variety of shapes and sizes with a wide variety of closures (Adducci 2008)



polyvinyl chloride, polypropylene, polyethylene, and polystyrene are extensively utilized in the beauty sector. However, as plastic does not break down naturally and turns into waste, the optimal option is to avoid using plastic, as many top natural companies are using glass and metal packaging. However, going with glass and metal isn't always the best option as it is more expensive and heavier, which means it'll cost more to ship, take more energy, and produce more emissions. There is a need for innovation to find alternatives to plastics in cosmetic packaging. Taking all of the factors into account, it is unavoidable to completely replace plastic with an eco-friendly material for cosmetic products. Several businesses are making attempts to address the issue. As a result, the minimalistic packaging trend is one of the artistic approaches to sustainability in the cosmetics industry. Minimalism entails reducing extraneous packaging design elements and allows refilling options to reuse a product's packaging multiple times, resulting in significant packaging production savings and a reduction in waste generation. To establish their brand image while retaining the sustainability notion, cosmetic brands are opting for a minimalist approach. Consumers play a key role in promoting reusable and recyclable products, because their demand helps shaping sustainable practices and actions. With their purchase decisions, consumers can contribute to reducing the global environmental footprint of cosmetics by supporting brands. Minimalism is a creative technique that reflects brand perceptions. However, it is important to figure out whether a reduction in visual elements can influence consumer behavior, especially in an environment where consumers are exposed to a variety of packages at the same time. Understanding the consumer behavior towards minimalist design on product packaging is important for devising strategies to maximize the salience of products in the marketplace. While minimalist designs are praised for their "clean" and "simple" appearance, little research has been done on the competitive and psychological implications of minimalist design on product packaging. The future study should examine the consumer perception about the minimalist design in cosmetic product branding, how it influences the perceptions of purchasing intentions, and how much they are willing to pay for the product with a focus on how to add competitive advantage with the design while simultaneously solving consumer problems. This review theoretically addressed the gap that might exist between consumers' perceptions of a brand and its reality, it can be further developed by conducting a survey and identifying the consumer perception and the issues that consumers face in reality while interacting with the brand, as well as determining whether the minimalist approach on the cosmetic product has an impact on brand image.

Conclusions

To summarize, we discovered that packaging design is crucial for branding in the cosmetics sector. It is the sole way to express the brand's identity when the packaging is displayed on a retail shelf. Design is a huge differentiator for customers, as it provides different shapes, designs, and functionality. Every day, when consumers use a particular product and examine its looks, their opinion of that brand is shaped. So, packaging design must complement the overall branding approach. To establish

a solid foundation for investigating how packaging design might be used to build a brand. It was discovered that packaging design is made up of two types of aspects: visual and structural, with the visual elements serving as the best brand message carriers and having the most impact on consumer perceptions and attention, that stood out from its surroundings in terms of color, shape, and images and had a better probability of creating a strong relationship with the consumer. When shopping for cosmetic products, it was seen that the consumer had a low level of engagement and hence made the majority of decisions subconsciously or with little inquiry and consideration. As though it were a spontaneous act. Many cosmetic goods are purchased as a result of point-of-sale decisions, and so visual cues at the time of sale are critical to the decision-making process for a cosmetic product. The research gap was identified and discussed exhaustively. The theoretical information shared in this study lays the groundwork for comprehending these elements and should guide marketers when incorporating packaging design into their branding strategies. Conducting feedback surveys to redesign the cosmetics packaging, considering the inputs/feedback from consumers might be of future interest.

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